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OSLO FOR JOHN GRIFFITH

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SUBJECT: SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES OF THE US OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

VESSEL GLOMAR CHALLENGER

1. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES OF THE US
OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSEL GLOMAR CHALLENGER IS PROVIDED
FOR BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION PURPOSES. THIS MATERIAL MAY
BE HELPFUL IN CONNECTION WITH NORWEGIAN PRESS REPORTS THAT
OIL AND GAS WERE DISCOVERED AT VORINGPLATAN 200 KILOMETERS
WEST OF LOFOTEN BY "AN AMERICAN RESEARCH SHIP."

2 THE US GLOMAR CHALLENGER IS A SPECIALLY DESIGNED DRILLING
SHIP OWNED AND OPERATED BY GLOBAL MARINE, INC., OF LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA. THE RESEARCH SHIP IS OPERATED UNDER CONTRACT WITH
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA. THE US NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION PROVIDES FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE OPERATIONS OF
THE SHIP. THE SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY AT LA JOLLA,
CALIFORNIA, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT OF AN OCEAN SEDIMENT
CORING PROGRAM (ALSO CALLED THE DEEP SEA DRILLING PROJECT)
CARRIED OUT BY THE GLOMAR CHALLENGER.

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3. THE OCEAN SEDIMENT CORING PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE AUGUST 1968. THE SOLE PURPOSE OF THIS EXCLUSIVELY SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM IS TO EXPLORE THE AGE, HISTORY, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE OCEAN BASINS AND THEIR MARGINAL SEAS BY MEANS OF DRILLING AND CORING THE OCEAN FLOOR.

4. IN A FOUR YEAR PERIOD FROM AUGUST 1968 TO MAY 1972, 349 HOLES HAD BEEN DRILLED IN THE OCEAN FLOOR AT 230 LOCATIONS IN THE ATLANTIC, PACIFIC, AND IDIAN OCEANS, AND IN THE MARGINAL SEAS. ABOUT 66,000 FEET (CA. 19,880 METERS) OF CORE HAVE BEEN RECOVERED. THE MAXIMUM PENETRATION INTO THE BOTTOM SEDIMENT ACHIED (TO MAY 1972) WAS 4,265 FEET (ABOUT 1,293 METERS); MAXIMUM WATER DEPTH IN WHICH DRILLING HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IS 20,483 FEET (ABOUT 6,207 METERS).

5. THE CORES RECOVERED FROM THE OCEAN BOTTOM ARE DESCRIBED AND THE RESULTS ARE PUBLISHED IN A SERIES CALLED INITIAL REPORTS OF THE DEEP SEA DRILLING PROJECT. DATA OBTAINED FROM THE GLOMAR CHALLANGER CRUISES WILL ASSIST IN DETERMINING THE MAGNITUDE AND DIRECTION OF BOTH HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL CRUSTAL MOTION. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE PACIFIC SEA FLOOR HAS MOVED HORIZONTALLY ACROSS THE EQUATOR IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION. IN ADDITION, A WIDESPREAD BREAK IN THE SEDIMENTARY RECORDS HAS BEEN FOUND THAT IS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN THE AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND REGION. THIS BREAK IN THE GEOLOGICAL RECORD SUGGESTS THAT A "CIRCUMPOLAR" OCEAN FLOWED NORTH OF AUSTRALIA UNTIL OLIGOCENE TIME WHEN AUSTRALIA HAD DRIFTED FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM ANTARCTICA TO TRANSFER THE CURRENT TO ITS PRESENT COURSE. FROM AN INTERPRETATION OF THE GLOMAR CHALLENGER CORES TAKEN FROM THE NINETYEAST RIDGE (NOW ONE MILE (1.6 KM) BELOW SEA LEVEL) IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THE RIDGE WAS ONCE ABOVE SEA LEVEL AND CONTAINS COAL, LAGONNAL DEPOSITS, AND OYSTER SHELLS.

6. THE GLOMAR CHALLENGER'S TYPICAL SCIENTIFIC STAFF CONSISTS OF AROUND TEN SPECIALISTS IN SEDIMENTOLOGY, PALEONTOLOGY, MARINE GEOPHYSICS, GEOCHEMISTRY, AND OTHER SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING FIELDS. THE CRUISES OF THE RESEARCH VESSEL ARE OPEN TO FOREIGN SCIENTISTS AND 66 SCIENTISTS FROM 17 COUNTRIES (UP TO MAY 1972) HAVE PARTICIPATED IN OCEAN SEDIMENT CORING OPERATIONS. THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY RECEIVES ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES FROM THE JOIN OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTIONS FOR DEEP EARTH SAMPLING (ACRONYM: JOIDES). JOIDES IS A CONSORTIUM COMPOSED OF FIVE LARGE US OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTIONS AND PROVIDES ADVICE ON DRILLING ITINERARIES, SITE SELECTION, INITIAL CORE DESCRIPTIONS, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE OCEAN SEDIMENT CORING PROGRAM.

7. EMBASSY STOCKHOLM WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS
IT BECOMES AVAILABLE. STRAUSZ-HUPE

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